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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, August 29, 1933.

Hello Folks: Last Thursday in my Garden Calendar talk, I told you about the tropical storm that hit this section, and since that time I have been looking around and getting reports on the damage. I find that the losses to fruits and vegetables are very heavy, and that in many cases gardens are practically wiped out. Where the gardens were on the hillsides they have been badly washed, and where they were in the creek bottoms they were flooded, and in many cases buried with silt. Fall plantings of turnips and several other crops were destroyed on low ground. The most serious loss to the growers lies in the washing of their soils. I heard of one truck grower who had the top soil from a 40-acre tract practically all washed away. It had taken this grower many years to build up and improve the soil on this 40 acres, but today the best of the soil is gone, and the land practically ruined. To make matters worse, the rainfall was accompanied with a driving windstorm which leveled crops, in many cases twisting off the plants and beating them to the ground. Sweetpotatoes apparently suffered less damage than most other garden crops, except on low ground where they were covered with silt.

Considerable of the fruit was blown from the trees while shade trees and ornamentals also suffered severely. Many of the trees that were damaged can be saved by proper pruning, and in some cases where they were split and broken, the split portions can be brought back together and bolted or braced so that the wounds will heal, and the tree still give service. In many sections, it is not too late to replant fall gardens, and you folks who live outside of the storm area will do well to check up and see what in the way of fall vegetables you have coming on and make additional plantings wherever possible. Many of you folks in the southwest have lost your crops by floods but you still have plenty of time to plant and grow various vegetables to keep your tables supplied. I always mention turnips because turnips serve a double purpose, they give you the turnip to eat as a vegetable and then they supply you with the tops for greens. You folks in the sections where the weather continues extremely dry have a different problem and it is very difficult for you to get fall spinach and other fall vegetables started.

In several of my recent garden calendar talks I've mentioned the possibility of planting certain non-competative crops on the land that is being taken out of cotton, wheat and other standard crops. I have also suggested that while horticultural crops of a non-competative nature may not utilize any large amount of this land, yet they are worth considering. Today I want to call your attention to the possibilities of planting nuts of various kinds on some of this land, for home use. Not for sale in an already oversupplied market. Take black walnuts for example, they can be grown over a wide range of the northeastern part of the country. Pecans are the standard nut crop for the South, Persian walnuts (perhaps you call them English walnuts), for California; Almonds for the Pacific Coast and elsewhere; filberts, or hazelnuts, are being grown commercially in

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western Oregon and Washington but filberts can be grown in many parts of the country. Unfortunately, the chestnut has yielded to the chestnut blight throughout the most of the eastern chestnut area, but our plant breeders are busy working up varieties of chestnut that are resistant to the blight, and we may get back to chestnut growing again. And shellbark and shagbark hickory nuts, why not plant them in your creek-bottom pastures?

I know the argument that many of you are putting up right this minute. It is this - "It takes too long for nut trees to come into bearing and I'll never live to get any good of them." As a matter of fact it doesn't take so long for certain kinds of nuts to come into bearing and suppose you don't live to harvest any crops of nuts from the trees you plant, those growing trees will increase the value of your land enormously. It is true that the young trees will require attention but very little expense will be involved. Take the black walnut for example you can plant the nuts in the fall right where you want the trees to grow or you can keep them buried in moist sand until early spring and then plant them. Walnut trees have been known to bear good crops in 12 or 14 years after planting, and then there is the timber crop later.

There is one point that we don't want to overlook when it comes to planting nuts, or any other crop for that matter, and that is to get varieties that are adapted to the region in which we live. Many of the failures have been due to planting poor varieties and even for home use we want the best. A lot of people seem to have the idea that almost anything is good enough to use at home but I somehow like a little of the best for my own use. And here is another point, you can often grow things that are not considered adapted to your locality. For example, a friend of mine who lives just outside of Washington in Maryland is growing some excellent filberts. I have a pecan tree on my own place, and on a farm out in the country a few miles from where I live there is a persian walnut tree that has yielded fine crops of nuts. Not in California, but right here near Washington. That proves that you can often do the things that are considered almost impossible, especially when you are growing them for home use.